

HOUSE RESOLUTION 163

By Bone

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the proprietors and employees of Cooksey's Market in Sugar Flat on the occasion of that venerable institution's sixtieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly pause to specially recognize the owners, operators, and employees of those successful businesses that, over the course of many years, have proven themselves worthy of their customers' patronage; and

WHEREAS, Cooksey's Market in Sugar Flat is one such concern; this year, the current owners of Cooksey's, John and Sheila Dickens, and the couple who own the property, Phillip Harris and Sue Cooksey-Harris, will celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the market's founding; and

WHEREAS, in 1949, Floyd Hobbs built the store, which officially opened in 1950 under the name F & M Grocery; together with his wife, Gertrude, Mr. Hobbs operated the family store until 1969, when Charles and Julie Cooksey leased the building, bought the business, and renamed it Cooksey's Grocery; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cooksey continued to work at a local paving company, so he hired his sister, Mary Cooksey, to work at the store during the day; Mr. Cooksey would open the store early in the morning, work until his sister arrived, leave for his regular job, and return to take over from his sister in the afternoon, closing the store every night. On Saturdays and Sundays, Mr. Cooksey worked all day by himself; and

WHEREAS, in 1979, Mary Cooksey quit her job at the grocery rather suddenly in order to care for her elderly mother, Geneva Cooksey; Mr. Cooksey chose as her replacement his daughter, Sue Cooksey, who, despite some early reluctance, proved to be as loyal,

conscientious, and energetic an employee as Mr. Cooksey could have imagined, remaining in his employ until his retirement; and

WHEREAS, Charles Cooksey bought the building and the land from Mr. Hobbs in November 1985, and he built an addition behind the store, created more storage space, and expanded his line of grocery products; he also had a friend, George Phillips, build a walk-in cooler for the market; and

WHEREAS, after enlarging his business, Charles Cooksey renamed it Cooksey's Market, and he continued to operate the establishment, with the help of his daughter and two other employees, until his retirement on December 31, 1994; his daughter and best employee had married Phillip Harris, and when Mr. Cooksey retired, the couple leased the building and purchased the business, keeping the name Cooksey's Market; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, Ms. Cooksey-Harris suffered a terrible accident, fracturing her back; over the course of the following seven years, she underwent four separate procedures to repair the damage, but despite these surgical interventions, she was unable to attend to her duties at Cooksey's to her satisfaction; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Cooksey-Harris decided to sell the business in 2002 to Joe Watson, who also kept the Cooksey Market name; Mr. Watson operated the store for only a short time, though, before selling it to James Walker and his wife, Tracy; and

WHEREAS, the business was sold again, this time to John and Sheila Dickens, who assumed proprietorship on May 1, 2006; when Charles Cooksey passed away on December 6, 2006, he bequeathed the building and the land to Ms. Cooksey-Harris, who now acts as lessor; and

WHEREAS, for sixty years, the people of Sugar Flat and Wilson County have loyally patronized Cooksey's Market in all its various incarnations, and while this allegiance to a local store is most certainly a testament to the proprietors' good business practices, it is also a demonstration of the pride Tennesseans take in their homegrown small businesses; and

WHEREAS, because of business owners such as the ones who have kept Cooksey's Market open for sixty years, and the spirit of self-reliance they embody, the Great Seal of the

State of Tennessee proudly includes the word "Commerce"; these businesspeople are responsible in no small part for the rich prosperity all the people of this State enjoy; and

WHEREAS, for their success in serving their customers over the course of six decades, the owners and operators of Cooksey's Market should be duly recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor and congratulate the proprietors and employees of Cooksey's Market in Sugar Flat on the occasion of that venerable institution's sixtieth anniversary and extend to them our best wishes for much continued success in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.